THEY WIN SUCCESS ABROAD

BUT AMERICA IS COLD TO HER DAUGHTERS IN OPERA.

Little Chance for American Young Women to Gratify Their Ambition to Sing to Home Audiences Europe More Appreciative Some Recent Successes.

There is scarcely a season of opera abroad that does not bring into prominence one or more American girls, and these patriotic young women enjoy their success abroad just in the degree that it brings them nearer to their final ambition, which is to come to their own country to sing. Most of them want to go only to the Metropolitan Opera House, but probably they would accept engagements in Boston, Philadelphia or Chicago.

Of course there is little prospect that all these young women are going to be gratified in their hopes. There are not enough opera houses in this country to engage them all. Perhaps after a while more cities will support their own lyric theatres and then the American girl will be able to come back and have her chance to appear before her own people.

MARY CARSON.

How little consideration there is for her hopes in this respect may be gathered from the manner in which "The Girl of the Golden West" has been prepared for production at the Metropolitan Opera House. This is an opera founded on an American theme and is being sung for the first time in this country. There are of course some American sopranos in the company and there is one in particular who might well have been selected for the rôle of the heroine.

It happens, moreover, that this particular person has done more for the fame of the composer in this country than anybody else. Yet she has been passed over and a singer from another country who does not sing in English, or for that matter speak it, has been selected to sing the leading rôle. So it is natural that the young American artist in Europe should at times be discouraged about her chances of coming back.

If the interest in opera throughout the country really does increase there may be other cities eventually added to the list which now includes Chicago, Boston and Philadelphia besides New York. In the meantime the American girls are making use of their opportunities in other countries and finding a degree of appreciation which is not always accorded to them at home. They are coming back as rapidly as they get the chance, which happens just now less frequently than they would like to have it.

Lucille Lawrence, who made her very modest beginning at the Metropolitan Opera House as a pupil of the opera school, has been attracting attention in Italy in the last few months of the opera season. She has been singing *Donna Anna* in "Don Giovanni" at the Teatro Pergola in Florence and has been associated with such Italian singers as Mattea Battistini and Gemma Bellicioni. Then she has sung *Tosca* with great success.

LUCILLE MARCEL AS MARGUERITE

The picture shows her in the costume in which the dramatic soprano always attires herself for this favorite diversion; for surely singing *Tosca* has become the favorite stage sport of the dramatic soprano. Miss Lawrence has also sung in Germany, and her singing in a production of "The Magic Flute" in German gained her success when she joined the opera company at Breslau.

Miss Lawrence comes from Kentucky and it was at the Metropolitan Opera House that she sang a few small rôles and attracted attention by her talents and her evidently serious intention of making progress in the most dignified way. She was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of Miss Callender of this city.

Miss Callender, who is an amateur only in name, has long been known as a singer of such skill that few professionals are better equipped. Of late years she has given lessons to pupils she thought worthy of her trouble. Miss Lawrence was one of the fortunate beginners to come into her care.

Later Miss Lawrence went to Europe to acquire the stage technique that it is impossible to master here. Her success abroad is going far to prove that she is destined with proper training to succeed. Miss Callender has sent for her to return to New York for a few weeks this winter in order that she may learn what the condition of her voice is at present. Miss Callender is a firm believer in the old theories as to the importance of song in operatic art and she will not be satisfied to learn only of her pupil's progress as an actress and operatic artist. She wants her pupils to be singers as well.

Marcella Craft is the lyric soprano at the Royal Opera House in Munich and she was selected to sing the part of *Mimi* in "La Bohème" when Signor Caruso went to Munich last fall to sing and incidentally to be injured by the fall of a piece of scenery while he was waiting on the stage to take out Miss Craft to share the applause with him.

MARCELLA CRAFT.

Miss Craft comes from California. She has studied in Italy as well as in Germany, and it was owing to that fact that she was able to take part in the performance of "La Bohème" and sing it in the tongue of the composer and of the distinguished guest who had come to Munich for his brief engagement.

Another American girl who has been very successful at Munich is Maude Fay, who also comes from California.

Miss May Scheider is a New York girl who has just been selected for one of the most important places in opera in Germany. She will after the present season be the first colorature soprano at the Grand Ducal Opera House in Karlsruhe. This is one of the foremost opera houses in Germany. Berlin, Dresden, Munich and Karlsruhe count as the first four in the country. The engagement is a great honor to this American girl.

It was under the direction of Felix Motti that the theatre gained its greatest importance from a musical point of view. As an evidence of the class of artists who appear there it is only necessary to understand that Herman Jadlowker came from that theatre to the Metropolitan Opera House.

Miss Scheider, who had sung as an amateur, never had an idea of making professional use of her gifts until after the death of her father. Then she sang for Mme. Sembrich, who immediately gave her a letter to her old teacher, Giovanni Lamperti, in Berlin. Thus it happened that Miss Scheider was one of the very last pupils of the great Italian teacher, who died a year ago.

She was engaged in Zurich for three years. There she acquired a répertoire of twenty-five operas, and she will this season add *Nedda* and *Mimi* to it. Next autumn she begins her three years engagement at Karlsruhe.

LUCILLE LAWRENCE.

Lucille Marcel has not only made a great success as the lyric soprano at the Imperial Opera House in Vienna but she has almost precipitated a crisis there. She recently left the company and will appear for a while in concert. She may come to this country next year to sing in Chicago or in concerts, with Felix Weingartner at the piano.

It was about ten years ago that Miss Marcel, whose real name is something quite different, went abroad to study with Jean de Reszke. Both he and his wife were so devoted to Miss Marcel, who is of Polish descent, that she made her home with the De Reszke family and travelled everywhere with them. She made her first appearance at the Opéra Comique, sang in concert in Russia and was then selected by Richard Strauss to create the title rôle when his "Elektra" was given in Vienna.

BEATRICE LA PALME
Photo by the Dover Street Studios, London

She in turn sang *Aida*, *Tosca*, *Eva* and *Marguerite*, in which she is shown in the picture. If it had not been for the differences between Mr. Weingartner and the intendant of the Imperial Opera House in Vienna Miss Marcel would have become the first lyric soprano at Vienna for a term of years. She is praised for the beauty of her voice, which is said to possess a very remarkable timbre.

Marguerite Lemon, although she returns to this country from time to time to coach with her teacher, Mme. Garrigues Mott, has not sung here in opera since she made a few tentative efforts at the Metropolitan Opera House some years ago. She has met with every success in Germany. Just now she is singing in London with Thomas Beecham, and her experiences there have not been as pleasant as she had thought they were going to be.

Her special object in going there was to create *Marta* in the first London production of "Tiefland." Her cold interfered with that plan. Later she had an opportunity to show what she could do. The complete financial failure of the Beecham season interfered however with the brilliancy of the representations.

The wealthy if unappreciated impresario has been especially generous in his engagement of American girls. Beatrice La Palme, who comes from Canada, is another young soprano who had her chance with him. She is shown in the part of *Adelaide* in "Die Fledermaus." She studied in Paris, sang for a while in the French opera houses and first attracted attention when Mr. Beecham brought her to London.

Mary Carson, who is shown as a very youthful and piquant *Rosina* in "The Barber of Seville," comes from Boston and has so far been heard only in Italy. She has been especially successful in the Rossini opera. She dresses it in modern fashion and not in the usual Spanish style.

MISS MAY SCHEIDER AS VIOLETTA IN "TRAVIATA."

MARGUERITE LEMON AS "POLLY."

JOINT VIEWS OF THE SELWYNS

PLAYWRITING HUSBAND AND WIFE CHAT OF THE DRAMA.

Orient Won't Do as a Background for Plays—More Romance on the Stage—Dramas That Run Away With the Author—What Audiences Want.

Edgar Selwyn, author of "The Country Boy," now playing at the Liberty Theatre, and Miss Margaret Mayo (Mrs. Selwyn), author of "Baby Mine," which is being presented at Daly's, offer the unusual spectacle of two playwrights in one family. There is no hint of professional jealousy lurking uneasily amid the easy chairs of the den at the Strathmore, where they received a SUN reporter one recent afternoon. It is a very cosey, homelike place, and Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn talk easily, sometimes together, sometimes helping each other's arguments, very rarely disagreeing. A recent trip to the Orient having been mentioned, both declare that the modern playwright rarely, if ever, finds there inspiration for his work.

"He becomes steeped with the magnificent coloring of the East, it is true, but he cannot, I believe," says Mr. Selwyn, "make it near enough to our audiences to be convincing. It's too tense to be really real. It is all right for light opera and for musical comedy, but while you rhapsodize all the time you are in it, when you get away and look back through the dull, drab atmosphere of everyday happenings you see that it would be like putting a dream on the stage. Your audience would say: 'What does he think he is trying to do?'"

Mrs. Selwyn agrees and adds:

"I believe that people must recognize their own possibilities or probabilities in the characters on the stage. If we depict the Orientals truthfully we depict a people absolutely alien to us in every particular. No, I think Mr. Selwyn is right, we will have to keep the East for our playground."

"But isn't it difficult to put romance in a modern setting, and don't the theatregoers demand romance?" the interviewer inquires.

If Mrs. Selwyn speaks first, it is noticed that Mr. Selwyn usually has the last word.

"The old fashioned romance where the hero kills four or five with one stroke of his sword will never come back," she says, "but the old fashioned romance with plenty of love and incident, where the adventures do not tax your credulity overmuch I should not be a bit surprised to find quite popular before very long."

You turn to Mr. Selwyn and ask him what he thinks.

"That may be so, but as you perhaps know, I am a senior partner in the firm of Selwyn & Co., play brokers," he replied. "We have the control of several popular plays in the United States and we receive hundreds of manuscripts every week to pass judgment upon. So far I have not associated the romantic play with any impending change in dramatic events, although we of course always have some sent in.

"I think the magazines are the thermometer of public opinion, and whenever there is a certain subject that obsesses them you will find that plays along that particular line are pretty apt to be box office winners. Take the muckraking plays, they were preceded, were they not, by the muckraking campaigns of the magazines; the Western stories were quite a feature of the periodicals before 'The Squaw Man,' 'Strongheart' and plays with a Western theme struck oil; Canadian questions were of considerable interest, and that interest was emphasized by 'The Royal Mount,' 'The Wolf,' 'Pierre of the Plains.' The occult and psychic fad of thought was plainly shown in the reports of the daily papers and in the more carefully prepared articles in the magazines and then dramas like 'The Witching Hour' made a hit."

Mrs. Selwyn nods. "I remember Mrs. Evelyn Sutherland once telling me that she never lost sight of the magazine point of view in writing plays, for she believed there you find out what people wanted and what they were talking about."

"You work in the same way?" you inquire.

Mr. Selwyn says quickly, "Yes, we both find that no matter how you dope out a play it never follows your lead. Somewhere along the line it gets away from you; your characters do what they please in spite of you.

"I remember Mrs. Selwyn starting to write a suffragette farce once and I thought she had a corking idea. I didn't hear anything about it after the start, and one day I inquired about its health and she told me with tears in her eyes that it got so serious that she had to stop writing it, for she knew a serious suffragette play wouldn't go at all."

"I don't think," interpolates Mrs. Selwyn gently, oh, very gently, "that the instance quoted is particularly apt. It didn't become serious in spite of me, it was so because when I came to write it I just discovered that although I had never had time to be a real suffragette my sympathies were so strongly with the woman question that I could not bring myself to treat the subject lightly.

"But I agree with Mr. Selwyn's statement. In writing my plays I find invariably at the end that the idea that induced me to start the play is lost sight of and there is not the slightest clue to it in the finished work. Nearly all our friends who write have the same experience, do they not?"

Mr. Selwyn answers her question with an affirmative gesture. "Except in the case of Langdon Mitchell and Gene Walter. Both of those men have a framework constructed and build absolutely on that. Walter in particular writes a play in his head even to the dialogue, and will often tell you that he has finished one when he hasn't touched a pen or pencil to paper. They are the only two I know.

"Take Willie Collier, for instance, with whom I collaborated in the new farce 'I'll Be Hanged If I Do.' When he gets through with a play there is nothing in it that it had at the beginning. Once in a while I'll hear something that strikes me as particularly funny and I'll say: 'That was a good line. Where did you get that?' and he says: 'Get it? Why, you wrote it. Don't you remember?'"

Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn agree that they occasionally do disagree.

"She didn't like 'The Country Boy' at all when I was writing him," says the husband, "and I really think she was surprised that he turned out to be a success."

"I really was," admits the wife penitently. "You see I thought he was crude and raw. I did not care for the idea of a hero being in love with two women at the same time. I thought it made him a bit of a cad, but as a general thing I have a much higher opinion of men than my husband has."

"Right you are," says the husband. "It's a tough proposition to make a hero out of one of my sex. They're not heroic. But you have one premise to start with, that there cannot be development without weakness. A woman is apt to overlook that fact when she judges our miserable sex."

Mrs. Selwyn nods. "It is true that when they first come they're like 'The Country Boy'—so full of confidence, such nerve, such enthusiasm. They tell a president of a corporation how to run his plant and their boarding house keeper how to make pies. Everybody gives way for them for the fun of it all, but when the pressure comes it is awful. I am really quite reconciled to 'The Country Boy' now."

"Ever since the first week's box office receipts," says Mr. Selwyn behind his hand. "Success is a great orator."

"And your opinion in regard to the requirements of New York audiences?"

"We both agree perfectly," says Mr. Selwyn as spokesman. "More and more outside Manhattan is the demand for bright, clean, wholesome plays with standards of morals and manners. New York is getting, I think, like the Old World in its refusal to be bored and its willingness to accept anything that does not bore."

"Of course the New York manager wants you to put your characters in smart frocks," says Mrs. Selwyn, "but they don't care in the theatres outside of the city, where plays that are not heard of here make big hits often."

"A 200 night run in New York has lost its significance outside," says Mr. Selwyn. "It may help a good play; it won't carry a bad one."

Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn met when they were acting in "Secret Service" and have been married ten years, most of which time they have been playwriting. His first long play was "The Rough Rider's Romance" and Miss Mayo's first success was a dramatization of "Under Two Flags." Her most popular play in New York recently, excepting "Baby Mine," was "Polly of the Circus," in which the Taliaferro sisters have appeared. Mr. Selwyn, besides the plays mentioned, wrote "A Friend in Need," "It's All Your Fault" and "Father and Son."

Photographs by Bangs, N. Y.

EDGAR SELWYN. MRS. EDGAR SELWYN.

LUCINDA'S EXPERIENCES

She Encounters a Nice Old Lady in Leaf of a Revolving Door.

"Did you know," said Lucinda, "that there are people who are afraid of revolving doors? No? Well, there are, old people mostly. I met one yesterday, a nice old lady.

"She was standing at the inner side of one of these doors in a store and I thought she was waiting her turn to step into one of the compartments as the door revolved, and so I stood there for a moment waiting for her to step in, but she let three or four leaves and chances go by, and apparently she wasn't going to step in, so finally I brushed by her as gently as I could and stepped in myself, and then as I stepped forward with the door I felt somebody in the same compartment with me and I was sure it must be the old lady I had seen by the door when I came up, and then I knew it was she and that she had been standing there waiting for a chance to step in behind and with somebody, and the next moment she was saying to me:

"'You don't mind my coming in with you, do you?' and of course I said 'certainly not,' and then I stepped along carefully and deliberately so as not to hurry her, and I held on to the bar in front so that nobody else in the door could hurry it and so hurry her, and then a moments later we both came out free and all right, clear of the door on the sidewalk in front. And the old lady said to me:

"'I am very much obliged to you. I am always afraid of those revolving doors,' and then she smiled on me and went away.

"That was a real experience, I think. I have known other people," said Lucinda, "who were afraid of the revolving doors."